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ABSTRACT

This case study offers a perspective on the effectiveness of project-based bilingual curricula in empowering the adult English language learner. The purpose of this study is to examine the English acquisition process of adult Latina women who participate in a project based bilingual language program. The program uses techniques that include different learning modalities, instructional methods, and the appreciation of language building through real world experiences and skills. The sample population includes four Latinas, ages 21 to 34 years, with varied levels of English language acquisition. These students are enrolled in a community adult school in northern California that offers English classes. Data collection procedures include 8 weeks of classroom observation, information collected from student surveys, and informal and formal conversations. Participants reported that bilingual project based learning, in this setting, serves as an important motivation factor and an aid in increasing their self-confidence, and it enables them to use English in practical, real-world settings. (Contains 64 references.) (Author/SM)

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Title Page

A Perspective of the Effectiveness of Project Based Bilingual Curriculum in Personal Empowerment of the Adult English Language Learner: A Case Study

by

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Abstract

This case study takes a perspective on the effectiveness of Project-Based Bilingual Curriculum in empowering the adult English language learner. The purpose of this study is to examine the English acquisition process of adult Latina women who participate in a project based bilingual language program. This program uses techniques that include different learning modalities, instructional methods and the appreciation of language building through real world experiences and skills.

The sample population includes four Latinas, ages 21 to 34, with varied levels of English language acquisition. These students are enrolled in a Community Adult School in Northern California that offers English classes. Data collection procedures include eight weeks of classroom observation, information collected from student surveys, informal and formal conversations.

Participants reported that bilingual project-based learning, in this setting, serves as an important motivation factor, an aid in increasing their self-confidence and enables them to use English in practical, real-world settings.

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The development of this project came from a simple Christmas gift. My love for Spanish culture and language, second language acquisition and cooking, prompted my mother to buy me a salsa cookbook at the local bookstore. Not only do I thank my parents for such an unknowingly powerful gift, but for always reminding me that I can complete and succeed at any challenge. Mom, special thanks to you for developing from your own life an exemplary model of a wonderful, intelligent, educator and mother. Blair, thank you for demanding in me the confidence to help see us through to the end of this project. Thanks to a special someone for drawing me away from my world when I make it too crazy. Creedence, your confidence and friendship mean the world to me. A very personal shout out to all my girls, your collective wisdom guides me like a star.

Finally, a special and warm felt gratitude is extended to the students and teachers at adult School. Your community, school and families gain so much by the work that you have put forth to better yourselves and your community of learners. We hear all too often of the failures in the field of education, your success is what prompted me to make sure that the world knows it now has a model to look up to. If success is measured by the way we see ourselves in our patterns of work and accomplishments, you were winners the first day you chose to enter the door of that classroom. Remember to continue the process for those that follow behind you.

This thesis reflects my efforts at organization, motivation, evaluation and development of the project set before you. There are many people who helped and guided me along this process. Madalienne Peters, Director of the Master's Program at Dominican University, thank you for time and energy. Also thanks to Lin Muehlinghaus

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Introduction

Imagine coming to a new country, bringing children, family and friends to a better life. One could look forward to sending their children to the schools of this new land with the hopes that they will learn the language, assimilate to this new culture, excel in this place and succeed in their own futures. Imagine also that the language of this new place is not your own. Your native tongue is something you use at your "empleo", with your friends or at home with your family. All around you are the sights, sounds, smells of this new community and culture. More importantly are the linguistics and logistics of a new language.

A few years later, the children are well integrated into their new surroundings. They are learning the new language well. They are encouraged by their school to continue to use their native tongue at home with you. Sometimes you are unable to help them with their homework however, because these concepts are foreign in the new language. You begin to feel alienated in this place. You must work in order to make a living in this new country, which doesn't leave much time with your family, let alone to delve into acquiring a new language. You see a notice in town advertising Adult education classes for the Spanish speaker who wants to learn English. Fear of the unknown and questions of your own ability cannot be enough to keep you from entering this classroom. You want a better life for yourself also with the ability to interact with people of your own culture as well as the new culture where you live. You are motivated to attend, not only to better communicate with your children and community but also to try for a better job or continue your education.

The participants of this study came to this adult school from different Spanish speaking regions. Their language needs however are similar, they want to learn English to communicate and participate in their daily lives. Through a well-designed curriculum that emphasizes the students' native cultures and languages, this particular adult school has created an uplifting and successful program. What started as a simple cooking lesson, blossomed into something much larger. The creativity and simplicity of building on students' origins became a project-based learning model allowing this adult school to successfully facilitate and foster English language learning.

Statement of Problem

Since its inception, bilingual education has used many instructional methods designed to support second language acquisition through multi-modalities and primary language support. Much of the research to date has been investigated on elementary and secondary age students. There is a gap in research that correlates a similar conduct of language acquisition with adult English Language Learners. As such, adult ELL face difficulties in enrolling in programs that support second language acquisition. I became interested in the students' success in this adult school's language program. I chose to observe and evaluate how this particular program used project-based learning theory in English language instruction. Project-based learning uses a variety of teaching methods and rich educational experiences that reflect the students' educational and cultural backgrounds and create enriching experiences to foster English language learning.

Within this context, *empowerment* is referred to as a collaborative, personal effort or feeling of success or power. The feelings, theories and ideas of one's *personal empowerment* are completely that, personal. This project hopes to take an observational

perspective on an adult English class offered to Spanish speaking adults. This class uses a project-based curriculum to deliver the instructional methodologies of the English language, i.e. grammar, spelling, verbal communication, daily life skills and community outreach.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study is to observe, review and evaluate a project-based bilingual curriculum and its effectiveness in empowering the lives of four Latina Adult ELL participating in the curriculum developed by the adult school. By including participant and teacher input in the survey design, questionnaire format and informal conversations, this study inquired, explored and attempted to illuminate information regarding the following questions and hypothesis.

Research Questions

The central research is designed to inquire into the personal factors of empowerment via the educational experiences of participants acquiring English as a second language via the learning theories and curriculum design of project-based learning. More specifically, the questions and hypotheses of this research will look to record and report participants' views in terms of the following questions.

- What does empowerment mean to the individual students?
- What types of personal experiences are created when an ELL participates in project based curriculum units?
- How do culturally aware instructional units empower the ELL?
- Can varied methods of project based curriculum promote success in language acquisition? Does success empower the student?

- What type of support such as community involvement or family support, foster empowerment/confidence for the ELL?

Based on these questions, it is my assumption that ELL who participate in curriculum units designed to incorporate varied methods of instruction centered around student generated projects will feel confident, have positive educational experiences and demonstrate success with language acquisition. It is also my assumption that successful experiences in the English language learning process will lead to the personal empowerment of these four Latina adult school students.

Background and Rationale

There are an ever-increasing number of adult immigrants to the United States who arrive at an awkward or difficult time to enroll in school. In addition to social and community building, immigrants must find jobs and eventually learn to communicate in the new language. Adult learners face a number of obstacles in language acquisition because of time constraints, primary language support, instructional methods and motivation (Bucuvalas, 2002; Obi, 1999).

According to Chamot (2000) because older students do not have an extended time period to develop academic English skills, it is important to find ways to accelerate their literacy development and access to appropriate academic curriculum and learning experiences. "The average number of years ranges from four to seven for students with schooling in primary language and up to ten years for students without primary language schooling" (Chamot, pg. 190). The work of Carrasquillo and Rodriguez (1999) concludes that effective language instructional programs involve strategies that include

the personal experiences of the student population in developing curriculum enriched through linguistics, culture and cognition.

Project-based learning theory centers around human senses and developing learning experiences that encourage students and teachers to discover patterns and regularities, to observe, to interact, to produce and to reflect. Project-based learning does not focus on the project as the end result, but rather the path and processes by which the student navigates independently and collaboratively in varied approaches to problem solutions (Sites, 1998).

There are no grade level norms or benchmarks in adult education. Programs described in this case study, require focused research on current successful programs in order to facilitate success on a larger systematic level.

Educational theorists and researchers suggest that varied instructional strategies are effective forms of meeting the needs of secondary language learners. In addition to these elements, educators must include aspects of the students' cultural background and experiences in order to foster a relationship of understanding and establish a base on which to build and implement instructional programs that support second language proficiency. Research literature indicates that "utilizing a variety of interactive teachers' methods allows teachers to better instruct students with varying learning/cognitive styles, and individual differences thereby engaging all students in learning" (Carrasquillo & Rodriguez, pg 10).

A project-based learning method allows students to participate in various group and individual assignments and practice an array of useful skills. "The collaborative nature of the investigation enhances all of these valuable experiences," (Scott, 1994, pg.

3), allowing for multi-leveled development in all of the senses via the new language. This approach makes learning a part of living not just a preparation for it.

Krashen (1996) believes that second language acquisition is successful when combinations of English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) and Sheltered English classes are combined with primary language instruction in a contextualized format.

Background and Need: Case Studies

The following section is a review and compilation of current studies of educational methodologies used with bilingual instruction of adult second language learners. Current and past research must be combined and considered here as a basis and need to illustrate the conception and content of this study.

Research Problem

According to Carrasquillo and Rodriguez (1998), those involved in education in New York City lack information on the effectiveness of bilingual education programs. The authors claim that the media has misconstrued quality practices and programs in bilingual education theory and too often only reports negative information or failing programs.

The researchers thus chose to observe methods that educators can use to improve language minority students' performance. Because classrooms have a diverse population of students with a broad variety of linguistic and cultural differences, the researchers look to clarify what determining factors are necessary for language instruction and language learning to facilitate effective second language, English acquisition.

Research Question

The general research question focuses on identifying factors that contribute to the academic success of Limited English Proficient (LEP) students. More specifically however, the researchers not only identify factors, but also observe the influence of these factors on exemplary practices and progress within the bilingual programs studied.

Data Collection

The authors studied two elementary schools and one high school in the New York City Public School District, each with successful bilingual education programs in place. A total of five researchers made school visits, observations of bilingual education classes and interviewed bilingual education students, teachers, administrators and parents. Teachers were also asked to complete questionnaires about the programs. In addition, the research team analyzed test data and evaluated student work.

Findings

In accordance with the theory that public education needs to provide adequate learning experiences to all students, schools are unique in terms of school leadership, staff and students' characteristics. It is the responsibility of the schools to deliver curricula and instructional experiences through bilingual education practices and ESL teaching methods that mirror the diverse representation of students and staff.

Researchers found that bilingual education programs do not need to bring students to the same levels of English mastery in order to be effective. As such though, the following ten areas of similarities were found in the three schools studied. These were: (a) positive school climate, (b) administration with leadership and commitment to bilingual education, (c) teachers with high expectations of students, (d) teacher

effectiveness and empowerment, (e) clearly defined curricula, (f) extra-curricular and co-curricular activities, (g) high student self esteem and self-expectations, (h) academic growth, (i) satisfactory attendance and (j) parental involvement.

The results of this study enabled the researchers to conclude that (a) successful bilingual programs are part of successful schools and (b) the involvement of the administration in the planning and implementation of the bilingual programs lead to program success at the school site level. Success of such programs within the three schools studied was a result of high expectations and goals set and agreed upon by students, teachers, administrators and parents. Challenging and effective curricula were designed to meet the linguistic strengths and weaknesses of all students providing individualized academic and social development within the acquisition of the second language.

Research Problem

Chamot (2000) found that educational research yields no comprehensive studies on English literacy second language acquisition of adolescents with limited functioning literacy skills in their primary languages. The United States has high literacy requirements for productive citizens and workers. Yet, a growing number of school age immigrants lack literacy and language skills necessary to complete high school requirements, let alone compete in the U.S. job market. Investigations provide many views on effective language acquisition teaching techniques for adolescents, while there is a lack of research correlating relationships between English literacy development of LEP students at the secondary level and older.

Research Question

Project Accelerated Literacy (PAL) is a study observing effective teaching techniques for English literacy development of the "under-schooled" adolescent LEP students. This study compares English literacy instruction with primary language support, bilingual condition, and English only literacy instruction, monolingual condition.

Data Collection

Over the course of three years (1997-2000), the Project Accelerated Literacy, PAL, study chose four schools in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, whose school populations reflect a high number of immigrant students, who have experience with LEP student support.

Teachers in the study were ESL certified and those participating in the primary language support condition were fully bilingual in Spanish and English. Student participants were native Spanish speakers, ages 14-20, enrolled in public high schools in the D.C. area.

Instruments included the standardized tests, Woodcock Language Proficiency Battery-Revised Spanish and English forms, and The Language Assessment Scales-Reading and Writing, Spanish and English forms. Additional instruments included structured interviews with students at the beginning and end of the school year, a phonemic awareness test in English and Spanish, a reading test in English with comprehension questions in Spanish, a learning strategies think-aloud interview, a translated and adapted version of the Pintrich Motivation Strategies Questionnaire (MSQ) and teacher interviews and questionnaires.

Findings

Chamot concludes to some extent that the simple results of this study show a "complex interaction" amongst instructional teaching techniques and development of literacy skills. Citing this study as a basis for additional research, the authors also claim that the study has shown to have implications aiding in the professional development of bilingual and ESL secondary teachers, as well as appropriate development of curriculum at the secondary level.

Research Problem

The central purpose of a study by Huerta-Macias and Quintero (1991) is to explore a gap in research literature dealing with the use of two languages, termed "code-switching," both in the classroom and at home. The researchers describe code-switching as a tool used in school but also with family and the community as a valued transition between two languages. The researchers view the use of code-switching as a valuable whole language approach to language second language acquisition and bi-literacy. Code-switching observations were performed on participants speaking native Spanish and ESL.

Research Question

The central research focus addresses the effectiveness of a whole language, code-switching instructional approach on the second language acquisition of LEP learners as it occurs within a social context both in the classroom and the home. The classroom/project goals were stated as follows:

- To enhance the literacy and bi-literacy development of parents and children through a series of participatory intergenerational activities;

- To provide information regarding the literacy development process in children to parents and to provide a setting for the parents to utilize the information;
- To enhance the parents' self-confidence in helping their children; and
- To empower the parents to connect literacy activities to their own social/cultural situations" (Macias & Quintero, pg. 71).

Data Collection

Over the course of four years, Project Family Initiative for English Literacy (FIEL), a multi-generational LEP literacy program funded by Title VII Office of Bilingual Education and Language Minority Affairs collected data on instructional practices of bilingual educators. Set in a large bilingual, bi-cultural city, families with a child in pre-kindergarten, kindergarten and/or first grade were invited to attend literacy classes at the local schools. Seven county's elementary schools were observed as part of the research process.

Focused on a single classroom with high occurrences of code-switching, research was conducted during two 12-week courses given in the fall and spring. Using a whole language approach, parents and their children met after school, once a week for 75 minutes in small groups of 5 to 7 families. Classroom themes were participant generated and open-ended allowing participants to develop their own needs and interests. Researchers collected 14 hours of video, observation notes, informal parent interviews and both class and homework examples. Video dialogue was transcribed during the summer. Teacher questionnaires and work portfolios also aided in determining language use.

Findings

The authors identified five major areas of emphasis on code-switching within this case study. 1. Elaboration. 2. Addressee Specification and Clarification. 3. Teacher as a Non-Native Code-Switcher. 4. Teacher/Parent use of Code-Switching. 5. Children's Use of Code-Switching. Developmental Writing and Code-Switching were a side observation discussed in further terms in the conclusion of the study.

Analysis of the data revealed what that code-switching is a "holistic approach to the acquisition of literacy. It allowed each participant to use each of his/her languages in a natural, meaningful was as the various classroom activities were implemented" (Macias & Quintero, pg. 87). Taking into account the relativity of conversational and social context, the researchers found that data provides valuable insight into the effectiveness of whole language instruction via code-switching on bilingual curriculum and instruction.

Research Problem

Ramirez (1992) studies the effectiveness of using English-only or the non-English only home language of the LEP student. The study addresses whether primary language instruction aids the student in second language acquisition (SLA) of English and content area language skills.

Research Question

Using federal objectives of LEP language services and educatory practices, the author asks which of the three alternative programs being used in public education assisted LEP students to "catch up" to English speakers. The author compares the Structured English Immersion Strategy and the Late-Exit Transitional Bilingual Education to Early-Exit Transitional Bilingual Education, funded by the Bilingual

Education Act of 1968. Specifically, research focused on students' ability to notice an increase in English language use and language based skills in relation to their native-English speaking peers.

Data Collection

This longitudinal study is an eight-year project from 1983 to 1991 that followed 2,000 elementary age LEP students of the course of four academic years. Participants were elementary age students from grades K-6. Data collection included information and observations from community, district, schools, classrooms, families, teachers and students. During the first year, researchers a) completed study design (Ramirez, Wolfson, Tallmadge & Memo, 1984); b) created instruments for data collection; c) prepared reviews of the research literature (Ramirez, Schinke-Llano & Bloom 1984); and d) secured and organized study locations (Ramirez, Wolfson & Morales, 1985).

During years two, three, four and five, researchers compared and documented the participants compatibility with the instructional programs and implementation of program models at school sites. Findings for these years were reported as First Annual Report (Ramirez, Yuen, Ramey & Merino, et. al, 1986), Second Annual Report (1987) and Third Annual Report (1988). The fourth and final year data were compiled with previous reports and presented in the Final Report (1992). The last four years of the project were devoted to developing analytical processes to address the research question.

The three programs compared in the study; Structured English Immersion Strategy, Late-Exit Transitional Bilingual Education and Early-Exit Transitional Bilingual Education, have basic similarities in instructional format but the variable difference was the duration of instructional time in English and Spanish. Phase One of

the study research focused on the evaluation of the instructional formats. Phase Two of the study research addressed possible differences among participant characteristics, which could affect outcome. Data were provided in full-length report for information to policy makers and practitioners about the effectiveness of different programs.

Findings

Although some similarities in instructional strategies shared by the three programs are beneficial to LEP students, data show "substantial" instruction in the primary language enables learner to successfully acquire the secondary language and "catch up" to peers. The author reports that a minimum of six years is necessary to acquire a second language. Finally, improvements in teacher training for culturally and linguistically diverse learners are noted as necessary means to provide cognitive, social and language skills to be successful in the learning environment.

Review of the Literature

This section includes reviews of literature from three areas: Bilingual Education, Secondary and Adult Education and Instructional Methodologies. Past and current research substantiate that bilingual education must be part of a cohesive curriculum if second language learners are to successfully learn English. Secondary and adult education claims that in order to fully acquire a second language, learners must be instructed in a method that models and supports their primary language. Project-based learning is a teaching methodology that incorporates the ideals of bilingual education, while culturally supporting the second language learner through meaningful and practical approaches to educational experiences.

Bilingual Education: History and Theory of Success and Empowerment

The history of bilingual education has had many changes in a short period of time. New methods of instruction and language program types are constantly developing. Theory for second language acquisition in education suggests that second language instruction is best supported through primary language use and real world applications which reflect the students' world and needs in order to build and foster language development.

Bilingual education is not a new issue in the United States. Earlier immigration waves often forced new comers to enroll their children in English only, bilingual or non-English school, both private and public. Ohio was the first U.S. state to adopt a bilingual education law in 1839. Per parental request, the state law allowed instruction in German and English. In 1847, Louisiana followed by authorizing instruction for French and English leading to an identical provision for Spanish and English in the New Mexico Territory in 1850. By the end of the 19th century, similar laws had been passed in other states. Bilingual instruction continued without state sanction in languages as diverse as Norwegian, Polish, Italian, Cherokee and Czech.

During World War II, political fears questioned the loyalty of non-English speakers and spawned an enactment of English-only instruction laws by a majority of states. By the mid 1920's the bilingual education system was "dismantled" throughout the U.S. Until a large number of LEP students began to fail and drop out of school, LEP students in English only classrooms were virtually ignored by the Department of Education. The Bilingual Education Act of 1968 "provided federal funding to encourage local school districts to try approaches incorporating native-language instruction"

(NABE, pg. 2). Soon the U.S. Supreme Court rendered that the "sink or swim" mentality pushed on LEP did not uphold the bi-laws of public education, which require "equal opportunity" to all students.

The Supreme Court's decision on Lau vs. Nichols, 1973, mandated that if English is the mainstream language of instruction, then all measures must be exhausted to ensure that English is taught to non-English and Limited English speakers. Congress soon followed and passed the Equal Education Opportunity Act of 1974.

Neither the Bilingual Education Act nor the Lau vs. Nichols decision requires specific instructional methodologies for LEP students. The Federal Office for Civil Rights performs a three step to test that requires schools provide:

- research-based programs that are viewed as theoretically sound by experts in the field;
- adequate resources—such as staff, training and materials—to implement the program; and
- standards and procedures to evaluate the program and a continuing obligation to modify a program that fails to produce results (NABE, 3).

The history of bilingual education dates back to time when both community and schools agreed to teach non- or limited English speakers in both English and their native tongue. Contemporary bilingual education has changed considerably across the nation with new immigration, population shifts and changes and varying theories for instructional techniques.

Cummins (1987), returns to his views on the requirement of successful bilingual literacy programs to meet the needs of linguistic and culturally diverse students. Cummins argues that in order to teach literacy to these students, teachers need not teach them to "read the word" but rather to "read the world"(Freire, 1987). He stresses that educators use the cultural diversity and experiences of the student through meaningful literacy curriculum. The author believes that these students will engage in the curriculum successfully, develop a sense of empowerment and challenge "the societal power structure" (Cummins, pg. 16).

The author states that collaborative power generated through contextualized curriculum affirms self-efficacy, and empowerment to create change in societal, educational or occupational contexts. Empowerment for the learner comes in many forms via the educational process.

Cummins refers to empowerment as a collaborative creation of power. Noting students who participate in well-designed bilingual programs or ESL classes become literate because of the power shared in these relationships in building links among, language, education and contextualized curriculum. This practice enforces and supports the experiences and needs of the diverse ELL.

Within this context, Cummins refers to transformative pedagogy, as positive interactions between educators and students in which creation of power is facilitated through meaningful experiences "within" the curriculum. Cummins sites the effectiveness of two- way bilingual programs on meeting the needs of the diversity of ELL. Research reports, "properly designed and implemented (two-way bilingual) programs offer a rich environment…in a climate of cross cultural respect" (Glenn, 1990).

Similarly, a second set of research notes that "the best setting for educating linguistic minority pupils…is a school in which two languages are used without apology and where becoming proficient in both is considered a significant intellectual and cultural achievement" (as cited in Glen & LaLyre, 1991, pg. 43). Cummins attributes a student's reinforced sense of self to long-term academic growth, noting that success in such programs is a result of the incorporation of primary language and culture in the schools programs and curriculum.

In conclusion, the author offers note that bi-literacy is attained with affirmation of students' identities via bilingual curriculum and educators who "aspire to challenge the operation of coercive relations of power in the school system and attempt to create conditions of empowerment" (Cummins, pg 29). Such positions of empowerment positively effect students' role in the classroom and curriculum.

Fishman (1977) examines the definition of bilingual education within the context of history and development of types of programs, their validity in terms of academic development and the degree of success for the ELL. Fishman defines bilingual education as the use of two or more languages of instruction in the teaching of a variety of subject matter. The author has divided bilingual education into four broad categories of programs (Fishman & Lovas, 1970).

Type 1: Transitional Bilingualism

In this type of program the second language is used to the "extent necessary" that LEP students can develop language skills to: (a) adjust to school, (b) master subject matter and (c) use the second language, English, as the medium of educational

instruction. These are basic goals designed as assessment for students exiting the bilingual program and entering the mainstream classroom.

Fishman believes that this type of program supports the objective of society to push a shift from the students' primary language to the secondary language, English, with no regard to the continued proficiency of the mother tongue. Such programs seek to bring the student to the attainable and manageable level of English with a quick transition from the native language to the new language. Community, parental and school support are not considered to be of value in monolingual programs such as this.

Type 2: Mono-literate Bilingualism

The goal of this type of program is to develop aural fluency in both the primary and secondary languages, developing fluency in the primary language as a link between home, community and school. These programs focus on developing literacy skills in the secondary language with no similar development in the primary language.

The author notes that this type of program falls in between "language shift and language maintenance"(Fishman, pg.4) meaning that because of the link between home and school use of the primary language, societal effects might promote primary language maintenance overtime. However, a language shift to the secondary language is likely to occur because of the societal rewards to those whom are literate in the language of the majority.

The author notes that an "intellectual imbalance" will develop between secondary language literacy and primary language illiteracy. This imbalance is a result of a lack of intellectual development in either language. Limited educational exposure and practice in primary language skills impede development of skills in the secondary language. This

raises problems for the community of non-native speakers who typically have developed the secondary language as a form of occupational security.

Type 3: Bi-literate Bilingualism: Partial

Programs of this type strive to develop fluency and literacy in both the native and target languages with certain subject matter restrictions in the primary language. Restrictions are generally related to subject matter dealing with the students' ethnic group and its cultural heritage. Normally, literacy is developed in the primary language in subject matter within the social sciences, literature and arts but not in science and mathematics (Rojas, 1966).

The author believes that programs such as these promote primary language maintenance with attempts at cultural acknowledgement and limited cultural development depending on the type of generated curriculum. However, Fishman notes that it remains the responsibility of the school to develop appropriate curriculum to facilitate program's goals.

Type 4: Bi-literate Bilingualism: Full

This type of program is designed to develop all skills in both languages in all domains. Instruction of all subjects is typically delivered in both languages as a vehicle to develop primary language maintenance as well as literacy in the secondary language. Fishman states that from the viewpoint of linguistic and psychological literature, "this is the ideal type of program because it results in a balanced competency in both languages independently allowing for the production of a balanced bilingual society" (Fishman, 1977, pg. 4).

According to the author, though, balanced competence assumes that both languages are functionally equal and this is not a valid reality in the current educational system designed in the United States. Many second language learners are immigrants or migrants to the United States and come with varying levels of primary language competency.

In terms of societal norms, programs such as these must clearly define the goals of functional use of two or more languages in societal roles that are not exclusive to those individuals with highly developed bilingual competencies. Language pluralism is the desired goal of this program, however this program does not take into account the degree of the students' primary language skills.

Why Bilingual Education?

Fishman writes that bilingual education programs are typically viewed as compensatory both academically and socio-economically for the non-native English speaker. Historically, Fishman writes, over many centuries, but most significantly since the Reformation, educational opportunity was privy to those who spoke the official language, excluding those students new to the educational system whose primary language was different then that of the majority. Over time it became apparent that LEP students needed education in the target language. English education for LEP students was divided into two types of language programs (Gaarder, 1967).

Compensatory Programs

Compensatory programs are rooted in the theory that it is advantageous to teach the student in the primary language. The author reports that compensatory programs define what it means to learn English versus become educated in the second language.

Fishman states "pursuing the latter of the two via the primary language" (Fishman, 1977, pg. 5) is not only valuable but progresses the learner with confidence in the acquisition of the second language. However, the author believes that compensatory programs produce a transitional language shift and force a mono-literate outcome of secondary language acquisition.

Enrichment Programs

As attention moves from lower to the middle and upper classes, bilingual education becomes more intensive. Such programs usually include study abroad, independent travel, private language schools and/or private tutelage. Fishman writes that those whom are secure with their "economic, social and political power" (Fishman, 1977, pg. 5) are more likely to pursue educational and cultural experiences of their own accord based on opportunity afforded to them. Enrichment programs are sources of valuable bilingual education however, Fishman believes that such programs are available only to those with the economic power to participate.

In general, this moves the modern view of bilingual education from equal opportunity to an "elitist thing" or as an enrichment curriculum to the privileged groups. According to the author, enrichment bilingual programs that are well designed to meet the needs of the LEP student population can be as successful as regular education monolingual programs are at delivering instruction to the language majority.

Bilingual Education, Language Learning and Language Teaching: Conclusions

The author cites research as developing the established view that minority students have positive relationships to school and society when they are recognized as part of the primary group. Positive recognition in these domains, although dominated by

the majority, help minority students to protect a profitable outcome in terms of education, cultural pluralism and minority rights.

Fishman states that among other educational woes, the American bilingual education programs suffer from "lack of funds, problems with Title VII, lack of trained personnel, a lack of evaluated experience including access to curricula, materials and methods of instruction and a lack of socio-historical perspective" (Fishman, pg. 6). Through enrichment programs and the self-maintenance efforts of non-English speaking cultural groups, bilingual education makes a true contribution to America's educational society. In terms of a socio-linguistic perspective, Fishman reports the maximization of language learning is most efficient when language teaching uses primary language as the means of instruction.

Krashen (1992) looks to review, evaluate and reflect on his opinion of the necessity of bilingual education. Krashen states that students' most "powerful aids" to successful English proficiency are primary language instruction and literacy development.

Primary language instruction provides the learner with knowledge and literacy. The author believes that knowledge in the primary language makes second language acquisition more "comprehensible". Literacy in the primary language is transferable to the second language because the learner is able to make sense of what is on the page. They have acquired the skills to read in a language that they understand.

Krashen cites his work and that of others (Krashen 1996, Shin 1994, Shin & Gibbons 1996) saying results show that intermediate proficiency in a second language is best gained through English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) classes and sheltered subject

teaching. Krashen claims that more proficient learners are able to use the second language in subjects using more contextualized language skills in Sheltered English classes, serving as a bridge between primary and secondary language instruction.

Krashen concludes his article by noting bilingual education can be improved by increased spending on curriculum, materials and training. Citing his own research he reports "60-99 percent of sampled teachers say they support bilingual education" (Krashen, pg.4).

School demographics in the 21st century reflect increasing numbers of people from diverse cultures (Salend & Taylor, 1993). Educators are faced with a need to amend traditional approaches in order to best serve the changes in our schools and society.

A change in instructional format is key to facilitating academic achievement for LEP students (Ford, Obiakor & Patton, 1995; Grant & Sleeter, 1998). The thematic focus is whether linguistic minority students are misidentified or under-identified as "exceptional learners." Traditional approaches to instruction do not meet the particular learning needs of minority students.

Educators are often misinformed of student needs or are unwilling to change instructional strategies (Grossman, 1998; Obiakor, 1994, 1999; Obiakor & Utley, 1991). This causes many language minority students to be "mis-assessed, mis-categorized, misplaced and mis-instructed . . . placing students in at-risk positions and perpetuating already magnified stereotypes" (Obi, pg. 5).

The Future of Education of Culturally Diverse Exceptional Learners

Current growth patterns in public schools show a proportionate growth between culturally diverse learners and "increasing numbers of students with exceptionalities" (Obi, 1999, pg. 6). Given this increase, educators in these classrooms need to be sensitive and willing to manipulate teaching methods in order to meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse learners with a wide range of ability levels (Ford, 1992; Grossman, 1998; Harry, Allen & McLaughlin, 1995).

Historically, cultural identity has been used as a determining factor in assessing the academic difficulties of minority students, mirroring the discrimination these groups face in the larger society (Cummins, 1989). In 1968, Dunn called for a change in classroom techniques in order to "reverse school failure" (Obi, 1999, pg. 7) for students who were marked as low achievers. Teachers whose lesson plans do not adapt to meet the needs of these students, perpetuate a loss of student confidence, feelings of inadequacy and embarrassment, contributing to poor student and teacher relationships (Dunn, 1968).

The problem faced by educators is in acknowledging and assessing what Minow (1985) termed "the dilemma of differences". If students' cultural and linguistic differences are ignored, then instruction is not tailored to meet their individual needs. On the other hand, recognizing these differences can promote and escalate inequality, with teachers failing to develop informed and appropriate strategies (Obi, 1999).

Needs Culturally Diverse Exceptional Learners in the 21st Century

A call for change in educating students with special needs, including language minority and economically disadvantaged students, must include advocacy for authentic

assessment and curriculum that is appropriate for these students. Collaboration and ties between home and school, in addition to recognizing the diversity of language and culture are essential to student success (Fradd & Bermudez, 1989). Collaborative, team teaching and learning using multi-modality approaches to instruct diverse learners is both effective and appropriate. Institutions training teachers must facilitate the process of cultural education and awareness experiences. According to research, if teachers become educated in a variety of instructional methodologies that include culturally rich curricula and activities, they can better serve the needs of a diverse student population(Armstrong, 1991; McIntyre, 1992; Obiakor, 1994, 1999).

Instructing via a curriculum that involves diversity, classroom teachers can model appropriate social contacts and behaviors for their students. In doing so, students are exposed to each other's life experiences and history, in addition to the unfair and often hurtful labeling, stereotyping and discrimination. Such exposure can work to eliminate prejudices and help students feel positive about themselves and others (Glock, Wuthnow, Pilievin & Spencer, 1975; Freedman, Gotti & Holtz, 1981). In addition to teacher education, the authors call for school districts to incorporate cultural diversity in their personnel and hiring procedures (Correa, 1989; Yates, 1988).

Empowerment Possibilities for Culturally Diverse Exceptional Learners

The authors write "the ingredients to . . . multi-cultural education are teaching people to experiment and experience (Obi, 1999, pg. 13), then the empowerment of diverse learners must come from educators who;

- understand fundamentals of general and special education,
- shift assessment and instructional paradigms, and

- o put practical perspectives on learned concepts (Obi, 1999, pg. 14).

Conclusion

The authors discuss issues of empowerment for diverse, exceptional learners and the challenges educators face in developing culturally sensitive practices that engage all students from a variety of perspectives. In order to facilitate such changes at the school level, universities and teacher credentialing programs must better prepare educators to create meaningful to serve all learners. Such changes should involve learners in positive, social interactions within the school and larger community developing an understanding and respect for each other by being inclusive and non-judgmental.

Secondary and Adult Education

The majority of the literature published on adult education focuses on instructional time, family, community and school support. In addition to matching instructional methodologies to experiences that mirror the larger community, research suggests that adult second language acquisition is a process by which motivation, prior schooling, proper assessment and community and family support render success.

Bucavalas (2002) delineates the paradigms, advantages and dis-advantages that adult learners face when acquiring a second language. Research shows there is not a "critical" time frame for second language learning however, there are differences between older and younger learners. Specifically, second language acquisition differences between children and adult learners are due to differences in age, not cognitive processes.

Older learners already know one language, sometimes more, and are familiar with linguistic skills and strategies. Older learners are self-motivated and better at "intentional

learning" than their younger peers. Contrary to such age advantages, older learners often struggle in socio-linguistic secondary language skills because they lack "contextual interactions", exposure to social terms or phrases, and/or feel embarrassed about making mistakes.

Although limited, research on successful second language acquisition with adult learners suggests that they have motivation to acquire the second language early in the process of language learning and normally are fully immersed in the second language with little or no opportunity to develop their native tongue. What is missing in second language acquisition research with older learners is the maintenance of the primary language. Adult second language learners rarely become monolingual; reports Snow, and often successfully master and maintain the linguistic and cognitive skills of two languages. The research suggests that educational and language programs that provide instruction and support the primary language, while building competence and fluency in the second language, are valued.

Rivera's (1993) digest examines the establishment of the United States National Education Goals and the reform of educational strategies in order to improve "opportunity and achievements of all students". Specifically discussed, is the neglect to include precise information regarding instruction and assessment of the United States ELL population. The article evaluates 4 of the 6 goals in regards to meeting the needs of students from many cultures and in various levels of the English language acquisition process.

Goal 1: School Readiness

Based on a 1992 report, which measured the progress of students "Readiness to Learn", the National Education Goals (NEG) Panel developed an Early Childhood Assessment System. The system would assess a student's:

1. **personal learning strategies**- with specific attention to "curiosity, creativity, motivation, independence, cooperativeness, interest and persistence that enable children from all cultures to maximize their learning"
2. **use of language**- "the talking, listening, scribbling and composing that enable children to communicate effectively and express thoughts, feelings and experiences" (NEGP, pg. 4).
3. **cognitive activity and general knowledge**- including problem solving skills, patterns and relationships, and cause and effect.

To ensure the ELL readiness, the digest states that school staffs need to be trained in the processes involving second language acquisition and in issues of diversity relative to students' cultural backgrounds. Trainings can occur within school districts or teacher credentialing programs.

Assessment must validate the primary language capabilities, while taking into account the unique heritages of students' families and experiences (McLaughlin 1992, Prince & Lawrence 1993). Proper assessment needs to incorporate diversity in order to be authentic and appropriate.

Goal 2: High School Completion

Goal Two requires an increase in the Hispanic high school graduation rate to at least 90%. A 1993 Goals report stated that the high school dropout rate of 16 to 24 year old Hispanics born both outside and inside the U.S. are higher than those of non-Hispanic groups. In regards to Goal Two, the digest reports that ELL are the "least well served among secondary students" (NEGP, 1993, pg. 3). The same goal claims that graduation success stems from instruction that focuses on life experiences and developing language skills through meaningful curriculum.

Goals 3 & 4: Academic Achievement

Goals Three and Four stress the importance that American students should leave Grades 4, 8 and 12 having demonstrated competency in challenging subject matter including mathematics, science, history, geography and English (Cummins, 1989; Collier, 1992; Ramirez, 1992). These goals do not define assessment of competency in these subject areas.

1992 and 1993 NEGP reports that consideration of the "linguistic competencies and wide cultural awareness that ELL bring to schools are being preserved, enhanced and shared among all students" (NEGP, pg. 5). The authors suggest that ELL receive credit for learning a language that is foreign to them, the English language.

Student Demographics: Implications Of Goal Attainment

In order to help ELL, demographic trends must reflect program design and instruction. The NEGP reports that soon most teachers will have had at least one encounter with ELL learners at some point in their career. All teachers' preparation programs and districts should provide adequate exposure and training in meeting

backgrounds and educational needs of the ELL. The authors note that some educational standards must be used to guide ELL instruction including ESL classes and primary language instruction for academic development (Collier, 1992; Ramirez, 1992).

Finally, inadequate assessment systems that are culturally and racially biased, skew test scores and are insufficient measurements of English Language Ability. Often this results in ELL placement in low functioning academic classes thus restricting academic development in the second language (Council of Chief State School Officers, 1991).

Researchers suggest that assessment of the ELL performance at local/school levels be flexible, allowing students to demonstrate their "academic" knowledge through different linguistic modes, including oral presentation, performance and portfolio assessment and testing accountability that evaluates the ELL performance as an independent group (Center for Applied Linguistics, 1993).

Instructional Methodologies: Project-Based Learning (PBL)

Society values individuals whom can solve problems creatively using multiple strengths especially in cases that benefit the community at large. Project-based learning encourages students to pull from a variety of intelligences to construct a meaningful product that reflects their process of solving the proposed discipline or problem. Project-based learning supports collaborative team building and social skills through student to teacher, student to community and between students' interaction while enforcing individual skills through decision-making, motivation, self-confidence and intrinsic challenges.

Stites (1998) asks the question why engage in PBL, and examines the values of this type of teaching methodology. PBL instruction places emphasis on long term learning activities that are student generated and sample a multitude of disciplines using real world experiences. Research has demonstrated PBL motivates students, using intrinsic personal interests in aiding students to generate and solve problems.

Real world life and employment skills are addressed in curriculum via relevant connections between the classroom and the larger community. Especially important to PBL are the relationships created between students and teachers.

"Student work-which includes documentation of the learning process as well as the students' final project-can be shared with other teachers, parents, mentors and the business community" (Why, 1998, pg. 1).

Components of Project Based Learning

Curricular content: Project centered content learning based on predetermined goals and standards. Both teachers and students are held responsible for modeling and supporting learning both "in process and product" (Why, 1998, pg. 1).

Student direction: Enabling student generated problem solving through decision-making and guided practice. Proper implementation requires modeled practice, revision and feedback, valuable for assessing both teacher and student development.

Collaboration: Ideally to be instrumented as a network to the community, this component involves the initial relationships among students and between students and teachers. Teaching opportunities include:

- collaborative skills
- group decision making

- relying on work of peers
- integrating peer and mentor feedback
- providing thoughtful feedback to peers
- working with others on student researchers

(Why, 1998, pg. 2).

Real World Connection

Depending on goal, topic or theme, PBL can relate to the larger community in issues related to or concerning students' lives. Striving to make real world experience relevant to real world connections, students may use a variety of resources to explore professional and personal experience in their larger community.

Time Frame

Curriculum units are designed to pose the subject or discipline and to incorporate ample student time in order to practice, to plan, to revise, to give and receive feedback and to reflect. Time is allowed so students will adequately relate meaningful experiences between project doing and learning experiences.

Assessment

Assessment in PBL is an ongoing documentation of learning processes via both self and peer assessment including teacher assessment and support as well as reflection. P.B.L is designed to develop ongoing curricular units that build on each other. Assessment focuses on evaluating success and setback within the learning process.

Thomas (2000) presents a review of the research on the teaching/learning modality of Project-Based Learning. In an attempt to filter non-examples, Thomas created a list of criteria to specifically define PBL. The five criteria are:

Centrality: PBL projects are central, not peripheral to the curriculum;

Driving Question: PBL projects are focused on questions that "drive" students to encounter, and struggle with, the central concepts and principles of a discipline;

Constructive Investigations: The central activities of the project must involve the construction of knowledge on the part of the students;

- Autonomy: Projects are student-driven to some significant degree; and
- Realism: Projects are realistic or authentic; not school-like (Thomas, 2000, pg. 1).

PBL is a relatively new form of teaching but many classroom teachers have been using similar formats for years. PBL is rooted in the research and practice of three traditional forms of similar instructional techniques; 1)Outward Bound Wilderness Expeditions, 2)Post-secondary models of "project-based" learning and, 3)university-based research in cognition and cognitive science applications.

Research on PBL is conducted in a variety of formats including, but not limited to; 1) overall effectiveness, 2) effectiveness based on student/teacher/school characteristics, 3) assessment and implementation and 4) assessment of individual modifications in a currently working program. Research in these areas is essential in evaluating the success of different forms of PBL methods.

Evaluative Research

Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound (ELOB) and Co-nect are two programs that have been extensively researched because they combine PBL and technology integration. ELOB has reported that since PBL implementation in 1993, 9 out of 10

schools reported that student scores on standardized tests increased. Such gains were associated with increased student motivation, higher attendance and positive overall change in school culture (ELOB, 1999a).

Research on the Role of Student Characteristics in PBL

Research designed to observe the role of the student in PBL can be conducted in numerous ways. Researchers can assess the effectiveness of PBL for a diverse learner population or modify features of PBL in order to fit a specific instructional design for a variety of student needs. Depending on the needs of the student population, PBL allows for student input in developing the curricular unit or processes by which learning occurs.

Implementation Research

Implementation research is designed to assess the processes involved with organizing and enacting PBL. Usually conducted through a hands on or observation process, implementation research evaluates a variety of factors including participants, curriculum design, work/school environment, or general process analysis.

Marx (1997) analyzed PBL in terms of time, classroom management, control, and support of student learning, technology use and assessment. Students and teachers at the primary level who participated in a project-based science curriculum served as subjects of the study. The author found that implementing PBL is an effective means of delivering curriculum only when program goals and expectations are clear.

Intervention Research

Intervention research is designed to improve the quality and effectiveness of PBL by observing any specific weak points associated with problems within the program and school support and services for both students and teachers. Program, curricula and

instructional deficiencies, in addition to intervention strategies, are all commonly addressed amongst research literature.

Conclusions

Thomas asserts that the existing research on PBL is limited and suggests further research-based principles for guiding organized examples of future research on PBL. Of the examples of research literature gathered, the following merits of PBL are concluded:

- There is direct and indirect evidence, both from students and teachers, that PBL us a more popular method of instruction then traditional methods";
- There are unintended beneficial consequences as a result of PBL including "enhanced professionalism and collaboration on the part of the teachers and increased attendance, self-reliance and improved attitudes towards learning on the part of the students (Thomas, 2000, pg. 6).

Because research is limited, further investigations are needed to exemplify the academic and social benefits of project-based learning.

Concerned with the ideas of how language was learned, Russian Psychologist, Lev Vygotsky, researched and developed what he coined "Socio-cultural Theory"(Williams, 2003). Socio-Cultural theory is based on the premise that language acquisition, specifically Second Language Acquisition, is a group process focusing on social and cultural experiences as the teaching tools for modeling the group specific values and characteristics. Vygotsky believed that language is a mental tool that people use to organize and control processes concerning memory, attention, problem solving, planning, evaluation and voluntary learning." (Williams, pg. 1)

Three General Principles of Socio-cultural Theory

Socio-cultural theory is an observation of how humans learn things through a problem solving process, whether on their own or with the help of another. Vygotsky has termed the learner as the "apprentice" and the teacher as the "master".

1. **Regulation**- There are two kinds of regulation in socio-cultural theory. Self-regulation is the person who independently solves problems. The second is the person who cannot regulate the problem autonomously and therefore needs aid in problem solving. "All other regulation is mediated through language" (Williams, 2003, pg. 1).
2. **Scaffolding**- According to the author, scaffolding is a term given to explain the interaction of the apprentice-master relationships during a learning task. It includes the following:
    - recruiting interest in task
    - simplifying the task
    - maintaining pursuit of the goal
    - marking critical features and discrepancies between what has been produced and the ideal solution
    - controlling frustration during problem solving
    - demonstrating an idealized version of the act performed.

    All mediated through language" (Williams, 2003, pg. 2).
3. **Zone of Proximal Distance (ZPD)**- Vygotsky defines ZPD as the "difference between the child's developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the higher level of potential development as determined

through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Williams, 2003, pg. 3).

In the context of social interaction between master and apprentice, learner growth is determined by the ability to exhaust all possible problem solving skills. The developmental level of the learner encompasses new knowledge and the level of possible development grows, shifting the ZPD. ZPD allows apprentice to use both personal tools and those of the master to gain developmental growth.

Socio-cultural Interpretation of Language and Communication

Socio-cultural theorists see language as a tool for thought not just message transmission. Vygotsky observed that the learner uses language as ideas of joint construction of knowledge. Communication then has no formal system embedded in its teaching since interaction in socio-cultural theory is social between apprentice and master.

Much of the socio-cultural work has been done exclusively in the are of second language acquisition. "Vygotskian second language learning looks mainly at form-focused instruction and most studies concentrate on oral planning involved in a written task where:

- learning is considered to have taken place when the learner uses scaffolded items late in same type of task
- socio-cultural theory does not consider rates of routines and learning" (Williams, 2003, pg. 6).

In socio-cultural theory, language serves as the primary tool for regulation of our environment. Language learning occurs through apprentice-master relationships,

modeling problem-solving techniques, and assessing growth as language development suited to the experiences of the learner.

Methods

This section of the paper describes the research methodology and the procedures that were used to participate in the study. This section contains the following sections: 1)Overview, 2)Research Design, 3)Research Questions and Hypothesis, 4)Community Access, 5)Participant Selection, 6)Research Site & Settings, 7)Data Collection Procedures, 9)Confidentiality & Ethical Considerations and 10)Limitations of the Study.

Overview of Research Methodology

This is an action research study that inquires into the educational experiences of four Latina adult ELL at a community adult school in Northern California. The purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of a project-based bilingual curriculum on empowering the educational experiences of these women.

This study encourages participants to look, reflect and observe their own educational path in second language acquisition in relation to personal feelings of success, challenges, frustrations and motivation. The study follows practical and participatory action research using surveys and open-ended questionnaires, observations and informal conversations. The study involves researcher participation in curriculum planning and instructional delivery. This study provides a view of the adult ELL through their own eyes and interactions, and reflections on the various methods of project-based learning used at their school site.

Research Design

Determining the appropriate form of research method came from organized research of the best way to enter a classroom with the goal of giving students time to reflect aloud on their process of learning English. The researcher is an active participant in this exchange of information. According to Creswell (2002) participatory action research is "best suited" when the researcher or teacher seeks to improve educational practices with specific attention to individual empowerment. On the other hand, practical action research allows a teacher to focus on developing educational practices designed as an analysis/reflection to systematic approaches used in the classroom.

Research Questions and Hypothesis

- What does empowerment mean to the individual students?
- What types of personal experiences are created when an ELL participates in project based curriculum units?
- How do culturally aware instructional units empower the ELL?
- Can varied methods of project-based curriculum promote success in language acquisition? Does success empower the student?
- Which types of support (community involvement/support) foster empowerment/confidence for the ELL?

I believe that adult ELL who participate in curriculum units designed to incorporate varied methods of instruction centered around student generated projects will feel more confident. These students will have positive experiences with second language acquisition and become successfully empowered in the English language learning process.

Entry into the Community

The participants of this study were Latina women from a small community located north of San Francisco. Between November 2002 and January 2003, I associated myself with the women who attended the school on Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 8:30-11:30. Previously, I had conversed and discussed my research goals and intentions with the school's academic director. I developed relationships with the women through classroom interactions and informal and formal contacts during this period of time. In the beginning, I engaged in conversations with the participants, discussing personal information, interests and so on. More importantly, I allowed the participants to ask me questions. These dialogues occurred in English, Spanish or a mixture of both.

In early January 2003, I was able to use the outcomes of initial, informal conversations in order to better gear my topic and research direction. At this point, I personally asked four women, each at various levels of English ability if they would be interested in participating. I reviewed and clarified my research design and familiarized them with the surveys and questionnaires. In turn, the participants also extended their efforts to familiarize me with their general motivation for attending English classes, in addition to informing me about their class structure and daily regimens. Finally, I also learned that these women were interested and engaged in my research topic. They wondered why I was interested in studying them. They had had limited inquiry into their education, motivation and confidence levels surrounding second language acquisition, PBL and empowerment.

Selection of Participants

In November of 2002, I introduced the whole class of women to my research project and myself. With class and teacher permission, I would observe classroom instruction and interaction from student to teacher, student to researcher and among students. The school, faculty and students agreed unanimously and expressed interest in the observation, evaluation and findings of this project proposal.

Upon receiving permission to proceed with my research, I observed the class looking for participants who came from different parts of the community, different ages and backgrounds, had consistent attendance, completed in and out of class work, different employment, if any, and self-motivation to acquire the skills to communicate in a second language. The participants are referred to as "(H)", " (A)", " (V)", or "(C)". The classroom teachers are referred to as "(K)", "(W)" and "(B)". The researcher is referred to as such or (R).

In January 2003, the students of the adult school agreed to allow me to observe, investigate, participate and experience their classroom community. I chose this particular adult school because of its use of project-based bilingual curriculum in the instruction of English and public success and acknowledgement evidenced by published student projects (Murphy, 2002). Four adult, Latina, ELL from the community adult school consented via written, translated permission, as well as verbal confirmation to participate in the survey and questionnaire. Participants' age ranges from 21-34 years old. All four participants are native Spanish speakers at various levels of second language acquisition. Participants were observed from classes in the Beginning, Intermediate and Advanced levels, ensuring a sample population of leveled speakers.

Research Site and Settings

All conversations, observations and instruction took place within the two modular buildings that the adult school shares with local district office. The modular building which houses the adult English classes, is divided by a thin wall and door, separating the structure into one small classroom and one larger classroom which includes the computer station. The smaller classroom is where the class begins the day as a whole group for review. At the point when the class breaks into groups, the intermediate group stays in the smaller classroom. The beginning and advanced groups share the larger classroom each with a teacher's aide guiding instruction and a technology aide at the computer table.

Data Gathering Strategies

Beginning in December 2002, I attended the adult education classes twice a week. The initial meeting with the class and the four participants consisted of informal conversations centered on establishing a professional relationship with the women.

In January 2003, the four participants and I began to discuss the meaning of the word "empowerment". At this time, each participant was given a demographic survey including biographical information. During this introductory phase, each participant and I had a one-on-one meeting in which research design and data collection processes were explained.

Basic Class Schedule

Initial part of class is a welcoming of students, both old and new, after the winter break. The class is designed to open and meet together between 8:30 and 9:00.

8:30 a.m – Journal entries

Normally this would be a time for the teachers to review the daily lesson plans while the students were writing in a journal on a given or chosen theme. On most days the women arrive between 8:30 and 8:45 in a consistent trickle until the large classroom is full. This tardiness is not a casual entrance, but rather a schedule determined by the age or grade level of the women's children. Most of the women have children that attend the local public school or the newly built, on-site daycare and pre-school. Each school starts at a different time. The women who attend the adult program stay with their children until the class starts, going to their own language program after the children are settled in their respective schools

9:00-10:30 - Small Groups

This hour the large class breaks up into three distinct groups that are homogenously grouped based on the English language levels of the participants. These groups are determined by various factors, including pre- and post assessment. During this time the groups work with teacher's aides on a variety of projects that include English language instruction via a specific curriculum unit. Each group works with the aide or teacher on a specific area of language usage and development, while at the same time one group is working on their project assessment on the computer. The current unit, "Comparison Shopping," includes instruction in present, present progressive and past verb tenses, prepositions, money management, household planning, label reading, and so

on. The assessment project is a movie shot on location while the women shopped at various markets within the community. Back in the classroom, the participants decide what items they will purchase and then create the audio/voice over/narration of the field trip movie. Finally, each woman will write a paragraph based on the purchase of one item using the comparison-shopping techniques of the unit.

10:30 - Break

In class, two women volunteer to bring a snack to share with the rest of the class. During this time, both Spanish and English are spoken in informal conversations. Each class has break together creating a heterogeneous mixture of language skills.

11:00-11:30-Whole Class Review, Reflection and Conversation

During these observations, I took detailed written noted on the curriculum and how students navigated through the objectives. In this process, I was able to gauge a student's progress and development through the class. Each Tuesday I generally worked with one student, sometimes two, depending on which group the participants was in.

(A) and (H): Intermediate to Advanced

(V): Advanced

(C): Beginning

On Tuesdays, each participant received the weekly survey consisting of one to four questions with a scale of answers from one to five, one being the lowest, least ~~effedctive~~effective and five being the highest, most effective. These scaled questions asked the participants to rate feelings of empowerment, important aspects of positive or powerful experiences in class and effective use of English outside of the classroom, at home and in the larger community.

Each survey also contained one open-ended question, which required the participants to reflect on their opinions, beliefs, frustrations and successes using a bilingual PBL format. All surveys were distributed in Spanish with the English version on the other side. These surveys were completed in class for three reasons:

1. The students had limited time to spend actually participating in class time, so class time was primarily devoted to the lessons,
2. It was important that the participants have time to focus on the survey, reflect and answer as honestly as possible,
3. The comfort level of the participants was an important factor to obtaining genuine, honest responses. Private information would not be shared in front of others.

On Thursdays, I spent class time reviewing any questions that participants might have had on the survey. These discussions were recorded on audiotape and transcribed in order to allow the participant to review and comment. This format assured that the participant and researcher each had a clear understanding of personal information being recorded and discussed.

Discussions did occur during regular class time. This allowed participants to reference specific examples of class and homework to their support answers. More often then not, time got away from us during these conversations and we would have to finish during break, after or before the next class.

At the close of each week, I reviewed observation notes and dialogue transcripts for general themes. I searched for general themes developing among participants, as well as those changes that occurred or were revealed by individual participant observation.

Seven weeks of surveys and audio taped dialogues were collected, transcribed, reviewed and recorded by both researcher and participants. During the fourth week, I taught a mini-language lesson using the survey as part of the instruction. The lesson used new vocabulary delivery via story telling and visual picture cues. This lesson format was a type of project-based lesson used to introduce new vocabulary on a certain subject. On the eighth and final week of data collection, no surveys were distributed. A final observation was recorded through written notes and I engaged in a final conversation with the participants where they reflected on their involvement over the eight-week period of time.

Data Analysis Techniques

Research suggests that empowerment is a concept whereby participants gain control over their own lives through participation in their community. The women in the study have been given opportunities for choice and autonomy in demonstrating their academic and linguistic competence.

Using both practical and participatory research design allows for analysis of qualitative and quantitative data collected to chronicle the empowering experiences that PBL creates in the lives of this study's participants, in relation to past, present and future research.

Using observational notes and transcriptions from audio taped conversations, all qualitative data is reviewed with participants to ensure proper meaning is conveyed. Upon verbal agreement from participants, qualitative data is reviewed a second time. The review process allows me to look for similar patterns, terms and phrases and general themes that would give examples to the literature reviewed. In addition to this, I wanted

to evidence to support the current research on bilingual education and project-based learning.

Three general themes emerged that exhibited empowerment based on the definition generated from participant discussions. The three characteristics exhibited by participants were:

1. self-motivation
2. increased self-confidence
3. use of English in real world experience

Ethical Standards

This study adheres to Ethical Standards in Human Subjects Research of the American Psychological Association (Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 2001). Additionally, the project was reviewed and approved by the Dominican University of California Institutional Review Board. Permission was gained by verbal consent in addition to signed, translated written agreements.

Conclusion

Summary of Major Findings

In the beginning, the participants and I began a conversation about the word "empowerment." We discussed the various meanings of the word and what exactly it meant to each of them personally. This definition was vital in order to create a working base from which the women could reflect upon their degree of change as they participated in the project, and on their personal feelings of empowerment.

These conversations created a trusting relationship between the participants and myself, allowing for honest, open reflection and discussion. Each participant was

actively engaged during these dialogues, stringing English and Spanish together, displaying signs of enjoyment, sharing thoughtful responses and taking the time to articulate who they were, how they felt and where they wanted to go using the acquired English. I found that this process kept data collection focused because of time constraints and aided in facilitation of research information in an organized and effective format. The findings from this study illustrate the effectiveness of bilingual project-based curriculum as a tool in personally empowering the adult ELL. Each theme is discussed in further detail below.

Real World Connections

1. Second language acquisition occurs when language-learning experiences mirror the community and background of the learner, thus enabling them to make real world connections to new information. Successful language building experiences, like those delivered in this PBL format are empowering to the students because they are able to use English within their daily lives.
2. *Motivation*

The motivation of each participant to acquire a second language is intrinsic and extrinsic. Motivating factors permit successful second language acquisition thereby enforcing the women on their educational path. In addition, students participated more in class, had higher attendance, performed better on assessment and projects, and created challenges for themselves when they exhibited signs of both internal motivation, receiving a variety of external motivators. These successful experiences are forms of personal empowerment

3. Self-Confidence

Participants in many ways exhibited self-confidence, through successful second language acquisition in PBL formats. This alone, they stated, was in turn a motivator to continue in the program because each challenge increased their ability to try new things. Self-confidence allowed participants to communicate effectively and naturally in English. Free discourse of language use in the classroom and outside community was evidence of higher levels of confidence and feelings of empowerment.

Discussion

Finding #1: Real World Connections: For complete observation, see Appendix A.

Participants repeatedly stated that they felt the most successful forms of PBL are the connections made between the curriculum and project assessments to the real world they live in. Language syntax, conversation, vocabulary and access to language experiences were reported to be useful when the women could directly apply it to their daily lives. These experiences were empowering to the participants because it allowed them to close the gap between language learning and practical language use.

With respect to the variety of personal empowering experiences of the four participants, it is clear that via real world connections, observations illustrate bilingual PBL as an effective function in student empowerment. Participants reported that the most useful curricular topics of themes were those that centered around there daily lives.

Discussion: Observation Example #1

This discussion between student, teacher and researcher illustrates how project based learning enforces second language acquisition. Successful second language

learners use primary language in informal conversations, especially those types of conversations whose underlying theme is of a personal and cultural context.

(H)'s answer reflects what bilingual theory research and practice suggest as appropriate and effective means of second language acquisition. In order to learn a second language, an d individual's educational experience must mirror life and cultural experiences. I found that (H)'s cultural experiences and background in learning and sharing this same recipe allowed her to have this conversation.

The design of PBL affords that conversations take place during casual, free, relaxed and familiar times in the classroom. During break time, the women describe what they see using the new verb forms. During break time, the women mill about, proud to share a meal with fellow students and teachers. They know each other, they spend time discussing problems, both language related and not, and stories. They speak almost entirely in Spanish during this time.

Findings support that a balanced competency between primary and secondary language use via rich cultural, educational experiences, promote bilingualism. During break there are no divisions of ability. The class is once again a whole. Each woman relaxes in the use of her native language. Their comfort levels increase because they discuss recipes, children and daily life. They also use this time to teach Spanish words and phrases to the teachers.

(H) receives many compliments on the quality and "sabor" of her salsa. (H) is proud of herself. She has much to share using something she is familiar with, such as salsa. She has had a successful language experience and is empowered.

Discussion: Observation Example #2

This project-based curriculum uses multi-modalities to deliver instruction. The teacher uses total physical response (TPR), speaking and reading to review new grammar rules and vocabulary before beginning any worksheet or written independent work. The teacher challenges the students to use prior knowledge to decode, decipher, translate and converse using key vocabulary. A significant review process in a PBL is what enforces the whole language instruction goal of linguistic programs

Participants report that the ability to understand and use the secondary language is a key factor to the personal empowerment of these individual women. Participants told me that this is what allows them to use English outside of the classroom. Vocabulary and conversational English is most useful and easier to use when it can be related to their daily life experiences.

Discussion: Observation Example #3

In this particular example, (V)'s personal finance questions induce a variety of language lessons. Because the context of the conversation was pertinent to (V)'s life and current situation, the vocabulary and grammar introduced and used, were strongly reinforced by her desire to learn and participate in a topic of use and concern to her.

Comparisons between language meanings and use help participants refer to grammar and language changes. Participants use these comparisons to analyze differences in spelling, translation, conversational phrases and grammar rules.

I found this point to be rich in cultural and practical analysis of linguistic use and understanding for (V). This lesson stemmed from a letter she composed, asking for a specific service. (V) has told me many times that she learns best from using content from

her life and situational experiences. This example shows the amount of vocabulary building that a simple, two-paragraph letter can generate. This lesson delineates a reflection of socio-linguistic distinctions between two languages and grammatical formats.

This project-based curriculum and instruction incorporate the ability to organize, compose, correct and complete text that affects one's direct life. Students are exposed to success and empowerment in the process and product phase of PBL.

Finding #2: Motivation: For complete observations, see Appendix B

In respect to this theme, empowerment and motivation seem to be interchangeable. Motivating factors, which perpetuate participant enrollment in adult English language classes, vary among the individual, however, the common found in research are:

1. Not to be seen as an extrana, to communicate with other anglos in the community,
2. To secure a form of employment or a better job,
3. To continue their education, attain a California General Education Diploma, continue with some form of higher education,
4. To help their children assimilate culturally and to gain the ability to help their children with school work.

Motivation factors also appear to relate to participant attendance and participation in class. These factors affect empowerment because successful second language acquisition depends on focused time and study, supported by use of primary language and effective instructional methodologies.

Extrinsic motivation was also observed in terms of participant success within classroom activities, in addition to successful language experiences generated outside of the school community. Participants reported that these motivators were components in their continued enrollment in the school.

Discussion of Observation Example #4

(A) is very much an aural and visual learner. She makes jokes often in class using both her mistakes and contextual jokes exhibiting her understanding of the concept being discussed or taught. She seeks to decipher sounds of syllables, constantly asking questions to show her understanding and challenge her self.

(H) quietly takes notes during lesson and discussion time. Her shyness is not a sign of lack of confidence because she will often voice her questions and answers whether called on or volunteered. However, she is very much an inter- and intrapersonal learner. She seems to work best on her own or in a small group.

Presented here are two different learning modalities, yet both are concrete examples of motivation positively affecting second language acquisition. Intrinsic motivation is an important factor in acquiring a second language because it is a key factor to successful performance and in turn personal student empowerment.

Because of the design of PBL, educational experiences are created in which use, application, feedback and growth are immediate or positively reinforced. These extrinsic variables are key motivators in enrollment, attendance and ultimate success in the program and second language acquisition.

Discussion of Observation Example #5

Participation and interaction between teacher, student and curriculum are one of the basic fundamentals of PBL. In turn, the participants' growth is evident because the interaction exhibits their motivation to use both prior knowledge and new information. Participation via checking for understanding, open discussion and question asking are language builders in and amongst themselves, and yet are strong examples of student motivation fostering successful second language acquisition.

Discussion of Observation Example #6

A meeting has been called of the Educational Foundation called Pura Salsa. In attendance are the groups advisors including, (B), (A) and (V). Pura Salsa is a discretionary board that controls the educational facets of learning English in ways that the community adult school does not provide.

One advisor brings up that she has spoken to a women conducting cancer research in the local area. These health concerns are discussed because families are affected when someone working in the fields transports pesticides home on clothes, skin and so on. There has been an increase in miscarriages within the 2nd and final trimesters of pregnancy with immigrant women in this area.

2.(A) also presents her proposal for music classes to be taught at the adult school. She has asked the other women in the class to determine their interest in learning to play musical instruments. (A) is interested in bringing this type of class to the schools because:1) Women are interested in learning new things.; 2) Much English learning can come about conversationally and through song, in addition to allowing women to practice

and use English outside of the classroom. Participants reported that other areas where they might use English would be at home, church or independent practice.

The suggestion is to allow (A) to teach guitar and make money. The group discusses whether money to pay for the class and instruments will come from donation money, money from and for teachers, and money from Salsa Funds. An integral part of motivation is the willingness to participate in self-governing measures of success. Here participants report that a great pride and respect is generated, shared and portrayed when they are able to take part in the decision-making processes of curriculum, finding, future classes, student affairs and community involvement.

Comprehensible and usable input coupled with personal goals is what participants cite as common, basic motivators to secondary language learning. These motivators, by participants' definition, develop personal empowerment and educational growth.

Finding #3: Self-Confidence: For complete observations, see Appendix C.

Confidence is a very personal characteristic that is generated and exhibited in many different forms. Student's personality emerged, as an example of increased self-confidence. This increase in self-confidence took the form of outward expression, positive student interactions with teachers and researcher, in addition to student-to-student interaction.

Discussion of Observation Example #7

I see the group practicing individually and in smaller side discussions about pronunciation and word meaning. The women use this time both as a warm up and practice of new and known sounds. With repetition and reinforcement they speak slowly and enunciate the sounds and words. They use the vowel sounds in words common

conversation words. They show their understanding by associating the vowel sounds with contextual words.

I found that a basic review of these rules helps the women with reinforcement of pronunciation but it also allows them to make mistakes out loud and hear themselves in an environment that is comfortable. Participants reported that this reinforces the steps they take and make every day on a path towards using and understanding a second language.

The women see patterns in verb conjugation using examples from PBL curriculum. They are physically connecting the verbs to language use. When the teacher reinforces other lessons and creates examples between English and Spanish, the women get the "A ha" moment when connection of second language information is made with current primary language information.

With proper teaching methods, the teacher introduces or reviews rules, gives examples, asks for examples, draws comparisons with primary language, checks for understanding and **THEN** gives out "Simple Present" Verb Handout. This form of instruction allows the women to become comfortable with the new information before attempting the new task.

The women show confidence with the new information. They use earlier information to prove they understand new information and even volunteer to go up to the board to demonstrate their writing skills in English. Their ability to volunteer reveals a trust that they are open to mistakes and corrections. With mistakes come corrections, one of the ways the brain stores new data. These women are learning a second language via the multi-modalities included in PBL.

When released to work independently, there is hesitation. The women review the initial question and they make mistakes. They analyze the information together as a group, try again and then check with the teacher again for clarification. They work independently for a few questions before answers are given out loud. They show signs again of self -correction.

With PBL, the curriculum is guided, but the result is demonstrated independently. This teacher strives to instill a confidence in these students that will allow them to use the second language outside of the classroom. Research literature reports that language acquisition in adults is somewhat hindered because of fear of making mistakes. Self-confidence is reinforced by the teacher through challenging the women to use prior knowledge and make connections between the primary and secondary languages, Spanish and English. Participants cited that a willingness to extend themselves through this process and make mistakes allowing them to feel more confident when attempting to use English outside of the classroom.

Discussion of Observation Example #8

I noted that this was an attempt to aid (A's) fellow classmates in translating the meaning of the word into Spanish. This was yet another sign of her growth and understanding of both English grammar and conversation. She also exhibited use of the TPR commands as a deciphering code for language use.

The ability to understand new information and assume the role of teaching other students was reported by participants as a huge confidence booster. Students cited that trusting each other bread a note of confidence in themselves, the curriculum, the teacher

as a facilitator and the process of learning a second language via the project-based learning approach. Participants reported that learning to trust themselves, fellow students and the teacher enabled them to learn from mistakes and positively interact in learning activities without fear.

Limitations of Study

Clear limitations to this type of research are included in this discussion. Participatory research can yield what may appear to be biased research because of its roots in problem solving techniques that are generated from research and immediately applied in context. In addition, common limitations arise when conducting research in the world of adults. These women have families, homes, jobs and other commitments to the community, priorities that require their time and attention. In reviewing research, I noticed that most data investigated the techniques of PBL and bilingual education theories on primary and secondary students, not adults. In fact there is limited research available on adult bilingual or adult second language learning.

Comparison of Findings/Results with Existing Studies

There is limited research involving adult second language learners and their participation in the use of various forms of instructional methodologies in developing language skills. Because of this limitation, the present study is compared to existing studies in general educational research. Thus, this study creates a new path for educational research studies to compare similar and different formats of language acquisition, instructional methodologies and adult education.

Implications for Future Research

As the number of people coming to the United States increases, second language acquisition remains at the forefront as a focus educational research concerning adult bilingual education. Educating the adult learner remains one of the least addressed issues in current research. It is important that future research include the needs of the adult language learner.

Overall Significance of the Study

The study shed light on the use of PBL strategies on adult, Latina interest and commitment to learning English. The focus of PBL centered around sharing recipes for salsa. This study provided a real-world context to document the increased motivation to learn and use English in a unique setting.

Too often, successful bilingual education programs are not given the amount of credit they deserve. State funding and program titles are limited adult education forcing individual programs to vie for limited resources. The program researched here started as a small, grassroots classroom activity designed to mirror and honor the cultural traditions of the Latina students enrolled. Currently the program has published and sold its own cookbook, funded the construction of an onsite daycare and preschool facility, management of some offered classes, new technology grants and won a national Tabasco Community Cookbook contest. Students remain in the program, excel in their jobs, continue their education, graduate with their G.E.D and promote enrollment to fellow family and friends.

As a researcher, this project had an impact on me in the many ways. I feel that the educational community lacks examples of successful bilingual programs. This study

showed me what exemplary teaching, student participation, curricular development and community involvement provide a setting for successful second language acquisition.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Finding #1: Real World Connections

Observation Example #1

(W)- speaking slowly and using some Total Physical Response gestures, –" How did you make it? Did you cook the tomatoes is water or over a fire? Fuego." (T.P.R)

(H) - "En water. Ajo, cebolla, chile pasilla de fuego, mole."

W- "Tell me again in English."

(H)- Repeats ingredients and instructions in English with some assistance in the pronunciation of "onion".
"Tomatoes cooked in water. Garlic, un, unyone, chile pasilla over the fire. Roasted?"

(W)- "Well done".

(R)- "What type of words, vocabulary are the easiest or hardest to learn?

(H)- "The easiest are the words that I use in my life. Like cleaning, home, children, personal things".

(R)- "The easiest are the words that you use daily?"

(H)- "Yes and those that I don't use daily are the hardest."

Observation #2

****9:50- Small Group:** Conversation, Grammar group with (K).

Infinitive		**Present**	**Present Progressive**
Ex.			
to drink	I	drink	we drink
	you	drink	you drink
	he	drinks	they drink
	she		
	it		

(K): "Present is something that you do regularly, not always right now. Tell me, to walk."

The group responds.
" I walk. You walk. She walks." (Emphasizing the "s" on the ending of walks.)

(K): "Yeah, that is music to my ears."

(K): "Present Progressive. I have three rules."

1. It must be happening right now.
2. It must be used with the verb 'to be'.
3. It must use the main verb with 'ing ending (main + 'ing).

(K): Rule #1 example: "Right now I am teaching and I am talking. You are sitting, you are listening, you are learning. Understand?"

(K): Rule #2 example: "What is the verb 'to be' for right now?

(A): "I am. You are. She is. We are. You are. They are."

(K): "Wonderful. (Looking at H) Now we need the main verb plus the 'ing ending."

(A): (Looking at H) "El verbo principal"

(H): "I am walking."

(K): What can we say? You?"

(H): "You are walking. She ees walking."

(K): "Shorter 'i' (H)."

(H): "Es."

(K): "Shorter."

(H): "Is."

(K): "Good."

(K): "Now are these understandable? What are the rules?"

Observation Example #3
Ex. "hoppe"

(B): "What's the long vowel rule?" She models pronunciation of "hope" and corrects spelling. Proofreading is done in English with a Spanish used for some translations and/or explanations. This is the advanced group so little if any translation is needed. More often then not, (V) is translating or explaining a concept in Spanish for the teacher and researchers use and vocabulary knowledge.

Ex. to-
two-
too-

The teacher reviews the difference of these homonyms.

(B): "In Spanish would you need this?"

Ex. past
passed

Ex. I have started…

(B): "You don't use the compound past tense in English? I have …"

(V): "I don't use it much. With our exercises of study, they don't practice that often."

(B): "We are at the next level of English. You must try and use it on your own."

(V): "I understand it when I read. Is it more formal then using 'I was …'?"

(B): "It's more of a form of progression."

10:00- Review of decoding and basic vowel sounds for reading fluency.

Review of one-letter consonant sounds. (B): "Concentrate on the differences in pronunciation of similar sounding consonants. There are words where the pronunciation makes a difference."

A review and modeling of consonant pronunciation occurs.

Example: B/D, T/D, H "huh" and Y" in year.

Appendix B

Finding #2: Motivation

Observation Example #4

9:00- Small groups
Review of long and short vowels
Syllable Discussion:

1. Each syllable has one vowel sound
2. Division of syllables can happen when two of the same consonants are together.

Example: "wiggle"
(T) " What kind of syllable is this?"

CVC
VC'e'

(A) "wig" but uses a long "i" sound
(H) "wig" but uses a long "i" sound

(T) " Who remembers last Thursday, we learned a new syllable?" Remember this?
C'le'= blend
Example: "wig/gle" The teacher draws a picture of a blender and proceeds to explain the word in terms of a kitchen appliance that the women commonly use.

(T) "Remember how you blend ingredients together for, let's say, salsa? Things get all mixed up together? That is like this type of syllable. The sounds are blended together.

Example: "bub/ble"
"dwin/dle"

(A) replies in Spanish "Oh, disminuir, menguar or mermar."

9:30-Interview with (V), see transcribed notes…

9:50-Switch with computer groups. (A) works with a teacher's aide and another student in their conversation group. The group is working with Present Tense Practice in 3rd person singular.

(T)- Cry, Fly, Try – Change the "y" to an "i".

(A)- "I need a list of the rules/words that don't follow the rules. In Spanish there are irregular/regular but in English this always changes."

Observation Example #5

Example: "little"

(T)- "What is it?"

(H)- "Short."

(T)- "Why is it short?"

(H)- "Divide."

(T)- "Right."

Example: 'lit/tle'

(T)- "Do you remember what happens with the 'le' on the end?

(H)- "E. No sound."

(T)- "We blend and the sound is '-tle'."

(A)- "tle." (She walks to the easel and points to the example.)
"With a blend, the first syllable is always short?"

(T)- "In English, almost always because of the syllable, CVC.

(A)- "Mas bien, siempre."

Example: 'leaf'

(H)- "Long. Entonces two vowels."
(T)- "When we have two vowels together, tell us (H), what happens?"

(H)- "One vowel, 'a' has no sound and 'e' is long."

(A) checks for verification with (H) in Spanish. (H) returns the explanation in Spanish.

(T)- "Correct. When the vowel says its name, it's long."

(A) translates in to Spanish the general idea of the preceding grammar lesson to (C).
(C) answers in Spanish that she is having a lot of trouble with this because she doesn't understand.

Example: 'goat'

(T)- "What do you see (C)?"

(C)- "I don't know. I think long. Esto me confuda mucho."

(T)- "Is it hard, difficult?"

(C)- "A little. Long. Two vocals."

Example: 'say'

(C)- "Long."

(T)- "Why is it long (A)? This one is hard."

(A)- "'Y' is almost a vowel."

(T)- "'Y' on the end is like a vowel. These two vowels together and you hear long 'a' and not the 'y'."

(A) translates for (C) and another student.

Observation Example #6

(V): "I suggest choosing one instrument and offering the class to gauge how many students would attend. What happens when we run out of money?"

(B): "We can make money. I am concerned about if the women enjoy music classes, we can figure out a way to make the money. I am devoted to bringing any class that the women feel will help to facilitate language learning in ways that are not offered at the moment.

(V): "Can I speak in Spanish? First, I will say it in English, then Spanish. (Reviewing meeting discussion thus far.) We will try the class [and spend] up to [a certain] amount of money. After that we have to work together and be conscious about volunteering and making sure we can still make money. We can continue to sell our cookbooks and participate in selling and marketing our salsas at local community events. (Turns to (A) and explains translation to (A). (A) nods and finishes (V)'s sentences, exhibiting her understanding of what was said.)

(Community Member): "How much money should we earmark?"

(V): "Our fieldtrips are really important. Do we pay for those? We need to make sure our money is spent will. If I want to learn to play guitar, I might pay $20 and then I can practice at home."

The meeting concludes with the women deciding that some guitars would be priced and bought by Pura Salsa funds. The also decided that some donations from community, individuals and companies might be needed to continually support the new class if it was successful.

Appendix C

Finding #3: Self-Confidence

Observation Example #7
8:30 – Vowels
The large group reviews vowels and pronunciation with (K) on black board.

a **a** **a** - Hint: Mouth is open and smiles as you say a long vowel.

Ex. –at, -al, -an

fate, rate

e **e** **e** –

Ex. pet, Pete

i **i** **i** –

Ex. –is, pit, hide

o **o** **o** –

Ex. hop, hope

u **u** **u** –

Ex. tub, tube

(**T**) – "The way I hear some people doing it . . . "
"In Spanish it sounds like . . ."

The teacher models correct and incorrect pronunciation, highlighting the differences and between the letters pronunciation in Spanish and English. She also uses this time to point out certain difficulties the women might be having.

(T) "Think is it short or long, open your mouth more. . . How do you know?

The women answer using certain grammatical rules that they have been taught to help with sound decoding. For example;

1. vowel, consonant, vowel – short vowel sound
2. vowel, consonant, e – long vowel sound

(T) "Personas must hear something 20 times before they will remember. . .you only have 19 more. . ."

9:00 – small groups
The teacher is reviewing Infinitive and Present forms of regular and irregular verbs. Each group is with a teacher's aide and will rotate into comparison shopping project on the computers.

As a group they review what the infinitive verb form is and how basic verb conjugation works. Each woman takes a turn conjugating the examples into present tense on the board. They work together at their seats and assist the volunteer when needed with corrections.

Infinitive		Present	
- to run		I walk	We walk
- to talk		You walk	
- to walk	He		You walk
- to write		She walks	
- to drive		it	They walk.

(T) "What do we see hear?"

"If I say, 'Emilia _____ to the store. . .which do I use?

"Which one is the dog?. . . _____ walks to . .

_It___, "Good short "i".

A student is at the board conjugating "to watch" on her own, out loud, correctly.

Student answers "to fix", correctly.

10:30 – Break

11:00 - Small group instruction continues and groups rotate.

I am observing (A) and another student. They are working on writing a biography and determining how and what types of questions to ask a person

Observation Example #8
9:00- Small groups
Review of long and short vowels
Syllable Discussion:

3. Each syllable has one vowel sound

4. Division of syllables can happen when two of the same consonants are together.

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(T) " Who remembers last Thursday, we learned a new syllable?" Remember this?
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Example: "wig/gle" The teacher draws a picture of a blender and proceeds to explain the word in terms of a kitchen appliance that the women commonly use.

(T) "Remember how you blend ingredients together for, let's say, salsa? Things get all mixed up together? That is like this type of syllable. The sounds are blended together.

Example: "bub/ble"
"dwin/dle"

(A) replies in Spanish "Oh, disminuir, menguar or mermar."

Author's Notes

The Story of Secrets of Salsa

According to Barbara Goodell and Teacher Kira Brennan, co-creators of the *Secrets of Salsa* bilingual project curriculum, "project-based learning makes information stick" (Murphy, 2002). Goodell and Brennan's program encouraged the English development of the schools Latina students through a salsa cooking curriculum that started out as a lesson of women sharing their stories through the common, cultural experience of food. What began as a small class cookbook then turned into a 66 page published book that was later sold to the Chelsea Green Publishing Company with funds supporting the English program at the school.

"Many Mexican women here have a feeling of shyness and invisibility", says Maria Goodwin, who compiled the text for the book. "The cookbook out these women out in the community, won them attention and accolades. They began to see that they had something to contribute". Some members of the group have even started their own small catering business called "*The Salsitas*".

"We began to learn how to value ourselves and each other as women, mothers, partners, cooks, housekeepers, workers and students of English. This has been about cultures coming together, literacy and women's empowerment," concludes *Salsita* director Kira Brennan.

Pura Salsa continues to grow and thrive in local community. Class size as well as community involvement are growing rapidly. The group, staff and teachers are gaining national recognition for their exemplary use of project-based learning as a modality to foster and facilitate second language acquisition.

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